

Message Text

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43

ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 AID-20 DRC-01 RSC-01 /089 W

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R 171440Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8861

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 1384

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: EAGR, GY

SUBJECT: HEAVY RAINS IN LATTER AUGUST AND FIRST TWO WEEKS SEPTEMBER
ADVERSELY AFFECTING RICE AND SUGAR CROPS.

1. LOCAL PRESS REPORTING AND PRIVATE COMMENT INDICATE DISTINCT
POSSIBILITY OF RICE CROP FAILURE SHOULD HEAVY RAINS CONTINUE NEXT
TWO WEEKS. WHAT HAD EARLIER BEEN TERMED A BUMPER CROP, WITH
PREDICTIONS RANGING FROM 105,000 TO 130,000 TONS NOW HOPEFULLY
WILL AT BEST REACH LAST YEAR'S 95,000 TON HARVEST.

2. RELIABLE SOURCE IN COURENTYNE COAST AREA REPORTS THAT 10
PERCENT OF CROP BETWEEN VILLAGE 48 AND CRABWOOD CREEK (ABOUT
20 MILES) ALREADY LOST. THIS IS INTENSE RICE GROWING AREA.
SOURCE STATES THAT SHOULD RAINS CONTINUE NEXT TEN DAYS 25 PERCENT
CROP LOSS INEVITABLE. WEST BANK DEMERARA FIELDS BETWEEN VREEDEN
HOOP AND PARIKA (ABOUT 20 MILES) ALSO APPEAR READY FOR HARVEST
IN ONE TO TWO WEEKS. ESSEQUIBO ISLANDS RICE CROP NOT DUE UNTIL
OCTOBER.

3. SUGAR PRODUCTION, ALREADY BEHIND LAST YEAR'S LEVEL, SLIPPING
FURTHER DUE TO RAIN. AS OF END OF AUGUST, 104,194 TONS HAD
BEEN PRODUCED (CUMULATIVE), AS OPPOSED TO 157,770 SAME TIME LAST
YEAR. WITH CONTINUED RAIN, FIELDS CANNOT BE BURNED AND WORKERS
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REFUSE TO CUT CANE. IN ADDITION SUCROSE CONTENT DOWN MARKEDLY.

AVERAGE 14 TONS CANE REQUIRED PRODUCE ONE TON SUGAR IN AUGUST.
LAST YEAR'S AVERAGE WAS 11 TONS TO ONE. SEPTEMBER RATIO
INCREASING. INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE SAYS QUOTA COMMITMENTS
STILL BEING MET, BUT AT EXPENSE OF HEAVY CANE CUTTING. CONTNUED
ADVERSE WEATHER WILL FORCE DECISION NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER TO CUT
ADDITIONAL CANE THUS AFFECTING SPRING CROP. SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE
CONSIDERABLY WITH JUST 4 TO 5 WEEKS DRY, SUNNY WEATHER REPRESENTATIVE
SAYS. KING

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